MARVEL
2099
31
APR
X-MEN
2099
Unto us...
...a son is born
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$1.50 US/ $2.05 CAN
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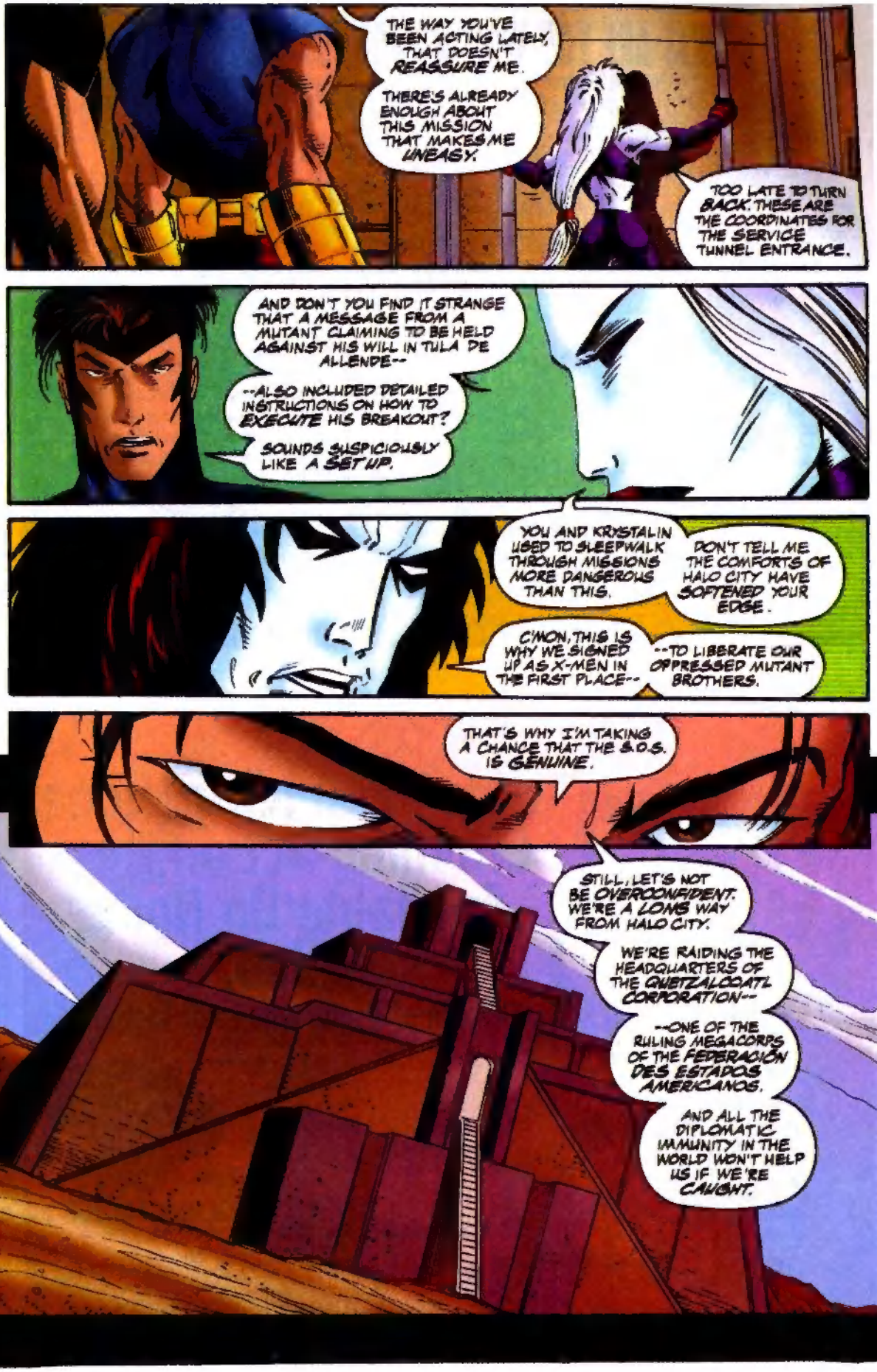
MEXICO.
ESTEBAN OCAMPO'S LIFE IS ONE OF COMFORTABLE ROUTINE.
SIX DAYS A WEEK HE WORKS AS AN ENGINEER ON THE METRO EXPRESS RUNNING FROM MEXICO CITY TO TULA DE ALLENDE.
THE PAY IS GOOD, AND THE TRAIN DEMANDS LITTLE OF HIS ATTENTION, REQUIRING ONLY THE OCCASIONAL SYSTEMS DIAGNOSTIC.
MOSTLY, HE WATCHES THE TWENTY-FOUR HOUR FUTBOL CHANNEL ON THE SPORTSNET.
ESTEBAN OCAMPO HAS COME TO THINK OF HIS WORKDAY AS UNSWERVINGLY PREDICTABLE.
HE IS WRONG.
MADRE DE DIOS! UN ESPECTRO!

NO, NOT A GHOST, ESTEBAN THINKS, FEELING FOOLISH, BUT A MAN--
--A GLOWING ONE.
ESTEBAN FRANTICALLY TRIES TO MANUALLY OVERRIDE THE TRAIN'S CONTROLS--
--EVEN THOUGH THE HURTLING TRANSPORT REQUIRES AT LEAST ANOTHER HALF KLIK TO BRAKE PROPERLY.
AND BY THAT TIME, THE FOOL ON THE TRACKS WILL BE NOTHING MORE THAN A BLOODY SMEAR ACROSS THE TRAIN'S ENGINE.
WHAT KIND OF MAN WOULD PUT HIMSELF IN THE PATH OF A SPEEDING TRAIN?
<I CAN'T LOOK!>
HE'D HAVE TO BE CRAZY.
OH, YEAH--
I THINK I CAN... I THINK I CAN...
ARE YOU NUTS?
VWOOOSH

JUST WHEN I THINK YOU'RE BACK TO NORMAL--
--YOU DECIDE TO PLAY CHICKEN WITH A BULLET TRAIN?
MAYBE YOU AND LUNA GET OFF ON THESE SUICIDE STUNTS, BUT NOT ME.
DON'T BLAME ME FOR TIM'S BEHAVIOR, HENRI.
HE HASN'T BEEN COMPLETELY HIMSELF SINCE WE TOOK OUT THE GRAVEROBBER.*
* X-MEN 2099 #26-29.--JOEY
NO NEED TO WORRY ABOUT TIMOTHY MICHAEL FITZGERALD. NO SIRREE.
I DIED ONCE AND CAME BACK, GOOD AS NEW, HANDSOME AS EVER.
THE WAY I FIGURE IT, MAYBE I CAN'T DIE.
THAT'S THE LAMEST THING I'VE EVER HEARD.
IF YOU'VE GOT A DEATH WISH, CHASE IT ON YOUR OWN TIME.
THE X-MEN ALMOST FELL APART ONCE BECAUSE ONE LEADER FELL OFF THE DEEP END.
I WON'T LET THAT HAPPEN AGAIN.
AFTER ALL THE TIME YOU SPENT WITH HALLOWEEN JACK--
--YOU SHOULD HAVE YOUR DOCTORATE IN UNSTABLE BEHAVIOR.
RELAX, HENRI. I'M ON YOUR SIDE.


THE WAY YOU'VE BEEN ACTING LATELY, THAT DOESN'T REASSURE ME.
THERE'S ALREADY ENOUGH ABOUT THIS MISSION THAT MAKES ME UNEASY.
TOO LATE TO TURN BACK. THESE ARE THE COORDINATES FOR THE SERVICE TUNNEL ENTRANCE.
AND DON'T YOU FIND IT STRANGE THAT A MESSAGE FROM A MUTANT CLAIMING TO BE HELD AGAINST HIS WILL IN TULA DE ALLENDE--
--ALSO INCLUDED DETAILED INSTRUCTIONS ON HOW TO EXECUTE HIS BREAKOUT?
SOUNDS SUSPICIOUSLY LIKE A SET UP.
YOU AND KRYSTALIN USED TO SLEEPWALK THROUGH MISSIONS MORE DANGEROUS THAN THIS.
DON'T TELL ME THE COMFORTS OF HALO CITY HAVE SOFTENED YOUR EDGE.
C'MON, THIS IS WHY WE SIGNED UP AS X-MEN IN THE FIRST PLACE--
--TO LIBERATE OUR OPPRESSED MUTANT BROTHERS.
THAT'S WHY I'M TAKING A CHANCE THAT THE S.O.S. IS GENUINE.
STILL, LET'S NOT BE OVERCONFIDENT. WE'RE A LONG WAY FROM HALO CITY.
WE'RE RAIDING THE HEADQUARTERS OF THE QUETZALCOATL CORPORATION--
--ONE OF THE RULING MEGACORPS OF THE FEDERACION DES ESTADOS AMERICANOS.
AND ALL THE DIPLOMATIC IMMUNITY IN THE WORLD WON'T HELP US IF WE'RE CAUGHT.

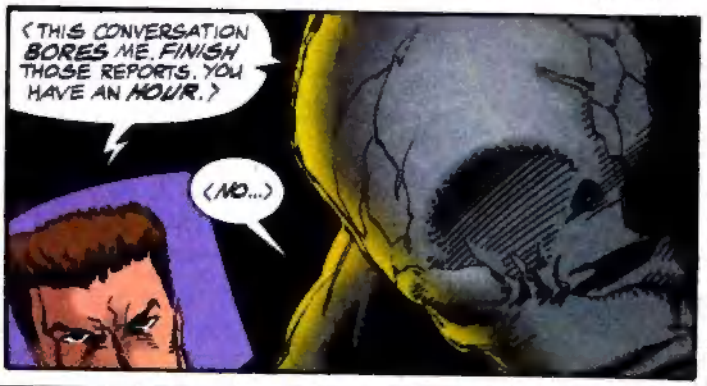
NEARBY.

〈BOOK, WHERE IN BLAZES ARE THE MARKET OVERVIEWS I REQUESTED?〉
〈I MEET WITH THE STARK-FUJIKAWA REPRESENTATIVES IN AN HOUR.〉
〈I NEED THOSE REPORTS.〉
〈I DO NOT FEEL WELL.〉

〈YOU TRY MY PATIENCE, BOOK.〉
〈THE MEDTECHS SAY YOU ARE IN PERFECT HEALTH.〉
〈IT IS MY SOUL THAT ACHES. I LIVE MY LIFE AS A PRISONER.〉

〈YOU LIVE IN A PROTECTED ENVIRONMENT, DESIGNED FOR YOUR OWN WELL-BEING.〉
〈ALL THE RESOURCES OF THE CORPORATION ARE AT YOUR DISPOSAL.〉
〈YOU HAVE MORE HERE THAN YOU EVER DID IN THAT HOVEL IN KINGSTON.〉
〈EXCEPT MY FREEDOM.〉

BZZT
〈CHAIRMAN BELIZE ON LINE ONE.〉


〈THIS CONVERSATION BORES ME. FINISH THOSE REPORTS. YOU HAVE AN HOUR.〉
〈NO...〉

WITHOUT WARNING, THE MONITOR BEGINS TO SPARK AND MOAN AS IF POSSESSED.
AN ELECTRICAL CHARGE BUILDS AND THEN FORCES ITS WAY OUT OF THE MONITOR--
--COALESCING INTO A WRITHING SERPENT OF ANGRY ENERGY--
<HAVE YOU FORGOTTEN TO WHOM YOU SPEAK, BOOK?>
<I AM JAVIER BELIZE, DESCENDANT OF THE TOLTEC KINGS WHO RULED THIS LAND LONG BEFORE CORTEZ.>
<I COMMAND THE POWER OF QUETZALCOATL, THE PLUMED SERPENT GOD OF THE MORNING AND EVENING STAR.>
NO... THE PAIN... STOP... PLEASE...
<YOU OWE ME EVERYTHING.>
<WITHOUT ME, YOU WOULD STILL BE ROTTING IN A CAGE IN KINGSTON-->
<--WORKING FOR THAT PENNY-ANTE GAMBLER WHO HAD NO IDEA OF YOUR TRUE POTENTIAL.>
<IMAGINE SQUANDERING ONE OF THE WORLD'S MOST BRILLIANT MINDS ON DOG-RACING STATISTICS.>
<YOU SHOULD BOW DOWN AND THANK ME FOR LIFTING YOU UP OUT OF THAT GHETTO.>
<I'M SORRY, BELIZE. I'LL GET YOU THE DATA YOU WANT.>
<PLEASE DON'T HURT ME ANYMORE...>
<I'M SORRY, BELIZE. I'LL GET YOU THE DATA YOU WANT.>

HALO CITY.
I'M SORRY I CAN'T DO ANYTHING MORE FOR YOU, TEN EAGLES.
MY MUTANT HEALING ABILITY CAN REPAIR WHAT'S BROKEN--
--BUT IT CAN'T REPLACE WHAT NO LONGER EXISTS.
THIS PROSTHETIC THE CLINIC'S DOCTORS PROVIDED IS FUNCTIONAL.
I DON'T NEED ANY MORE THAN THAT.
MEDICAL SUPPLIES
MEDICAL SUPPLIES
MEDICAL SUPPLIES
YOU SHOULD HAVE A GENETECH TAKE A TISSUE SAMPLE AND CLONE A NEW LIMB.
THAT WOULD TAKE TIME YOU AND I DON'T HAVE.
THE REVEREND'S ALREADY DEAD, AND I'M LUCKY I ONLY LOST AN ARM.
EVERY SURVIVING MEMBER OF THE LAWLESS IS IN DANGER.
THE GHOSTS OF THE DEAD WE BURIED IN NEW HOPE HAVE COME BACK WITH A VENGEANCE--
--AND I'M SURE THEY'RE HEADING FOR HALO CITY.
EXCUSE ME. SORRY TO INTERRUPT, VICTOR, BUT SISTER LUISA TOLD ME YOU WERE IN HERE.
YOU KNOW, WE NEVER HAD A CHANCE TO SAY GOODBYE IN NEW MEX--
KRYSTALIN...
VICTOR, WHAT HAPPENED TO YOUR ARM?

IT'S NOTHING.
NOTHING?!? YOU SAY THAT LIKE IT'S ONLY A FLESH WOUND. WHEN...? HOW...?
I DON'T WANT TO TALK ABOUT IT.
DON'T PLAY THE STRONG, SILENT WARRIOR WITH ME, VICTOR.
I KNOW THERE'S A LOT OF PAIN YOU KEEP BOTTLED UP INSIDE YOU.
KRYS, YOU ARE A BRIGHT WOMAN WITH A GOOD AND NOBLE HEART, BUT YOU DO NOT KNOW ME.
THE TIME WE HAD TOGETHER WAS MUTUALLY DIVERTING, BUT THAT'S ALL.
YOU'RE BETTER OFF KEEPING YOUR DISTANCE FROM ME.
TEN EAGLES IS ONLY TRYING TO PROTECT YOU, KRYS.
AN OLD ENEMY HAS DECLARED WAR ON EVERY ONE WHO USED TO RIDE WITH THE LAWLESS.
IN ALL LIKELIHOOD, HE'S HEADED HERE. YOU'RE NOT SAFE AROUND EITHER OF US.
STOP ACTING AS IF I CAN'T TAKE CARE OF MYSELF. IF YOU NEED HELP--
THIS CONCERNS THE LAWLESS, NOT YOU OR THE X-MEN.
FINE. I'LL STAY OUT OF IT--
--BUT AT LEAST TELL ME WHO DID THIS TO YOU.
HAVE YOU EVER HEARD OF THE FOOLKILLER?

TULA DE ALLENDE.
UNCONSCIOUS. JUST LIKE ON THE OTHER LEVELS.
FROM THE HINT OF SIESTADRENE IN THE AIR, I'D SAY THEY'VE ALL BEEN GASSED.
SERVICE TUNNEL MAPS... ACCESS CODES... DISABLED MONITORS... UNCONSCIOUS GUARDS.
I DON'T THINK WE COULD SET OFF AN ALARM IF WE TRIED.
THIS ISN'T A JAILBREAK, THIS IS A WALK IN THE PARK.
I JUST DON'T UNDERSTAND WHY-- IF HE COULD DO ALL THIS -- HE CAN'T GET OUT BY HIMSELF.
ASK HIM YOURSELF. THIS IS OUR FINAL DESTINATION.
MY HANDPRINT'S SUPPOSED TO TRIP THE DOOR LOCK.
VWOOOP
WHERE DID THIS MUTANT ACCESS YOUR PALM SCAN?
BELIEVE ME, IT'S ONE MORE THING I'VE BEEN WONDERING ABOUT.
I'D FEEL BETTER IF WE WERE WADING THROUGH A PHALANX OF ARMED GUARDS.
YEAH, WHERE'S THE CHALLENGE?
BE CAREFUL WHAT YOU ASK FOR--
KLANG
(ZERO GRAVITY WILL ACTIVATE IN TEN SECONDS.)
MY SPANISH SUCKS..
IT WAS MY FIRST LANGUAGE. FIND SOMETHING TO HOLD ON TO FAST--

I APOLOGIZE [redacted] THE GRAVITATIONAL INCONVENIENCE.
I CANNOT SUPPORT MY BODY WEIGHT COMFORTABLY UNDER NORMAL CIRCUMSTANCES.
DON'T APOLOGIZE. THIS IS GREAT.
LOOK AT ME! I'M BLOODHAWK!
I DON'T LIKE IT. I'VE GOT NO TRACTION.
WHOA... DIZZY...
OKAY, MISTER BOOK, NOW THAT WE'RE HERE HOW 'BOUT ANSWERING SOME QUESTIONS.
NO OFFENSE, BUT ALL IT LOOKS LIKE YOU'RE BEING FORCED TO DO IS WATCH VIDFEED.
MAKE NO MISTAKE, MR. FITZGERALD, I AM VERY MUCH A PRISONER HERE.
IN COMPENSATION FOR MY CRIPPLING BULK, I WAS BLESSED WITH A GREAT INTELLECT AND A PHOTOGRAPHIC MEMORY.
HERE I AM FED INFORMATION FROM AROUND THE WORLD. NEWS. ENTERTAINMENT. WEATHER.
BY ANALYZING DISPARATE DATA, I CAN ACCURATELY PREDICT EVERYTHING FROM MARKET FLUCTUATIONS TO POLITICAL COUPS.
WITH DATA I PROVIDED, JAVIER BELIZE TOOK CONTROL OF QUETZALCOATL CORPORATION.
SO YOU'RE PSYCHIC?
NO. MERELY PERCEPTIVE ENOUGH TO IDENTIFY AND EXTRAPOLATE CONNECTIONS OTHERS MISS.

THROUGH MY ACCESS TO THE MOST OBSCURE AND GUARDED DATABASES--
--I CAN TELL YOU THINGS ABOUT YOURSELVES THAT EVEN YOU DON'T KNOW
FOR EXAMPLE, MR. HWANG, ALCHEMAX HAS BEEN USING YOUR DNA IN ATTEMPTS TO RE-CREATE YOUR HYPER-ACCELERATED METABOLISM IN ANIMALS.
SEÑORITA, YOU ARE NOT THE ONLY BLOOD RELATIVE OF BRIMSTONE LOVE
AND THE GRAVEROBBER DID NOT KILL YOU, TIMOTHY FITZGERALD, HE FREED YOU.
YOU'RE LYING. I MADE CERTAIN ALL MY ALCHEMAX FILES WERE DESTROYED WHEN I LEFT NEW YORK.
HOW DO YOU KNOW ABOUT MY RELATION TO BRIMSTONE LOVE?
YOU'RE MAKING THIS UP.
I TOLD YOU I'VE GAINED ACCESS TO THE MOST PROTECTED DATA SOURCES.
I CALLED YOU BECAUSE HALO CITY WILL [redacted] THE NEXUS [redacted] MANY [redacted] THE NEXT CENTURY'S MOST CRUCIAL EVENTS.
I AM A MUTANT. I NEED TO BE THERE.

SOUTHERN NEVADA.
OKAY, BOYS AND GIRLS, OUT OF THE VAN. NOW!
THIS AIN'T NO SOBRIETY CHECK-POINT, THIS IS A GOOD OL', ALL AMERICAN HIGHJACKING.
PROCEEDS FROM WHICH WILL BENEFIT THE NOTORIOUS BALAZO BROTHERS.
THAT'S US, BY THE WAY.
YOU'RE MAKING A BIIIIIG MISTAKE.
NO, FRIEND, YOU'RE THE ONE MAKING A MISTAKE.
YOU'LL NEVER MAKE IT TO HALO CITY IF YOU DON'T COOPERATE.
THE DESERT'S AN UGLY PLACE FOR A HEAD WOUND.
CARRION!
OH, SHOCK. IT'S BLOODHAWK'! I THOUGHT HIS TERRITORY WAS FURTHER NORTH.
WHAT'S HE MAD AT US FOR? WE SELL THE TRANSPORT PARTS WE BOOST HERE TO CENTRAL EUROPE.
I'D CALL THAT RECYCLING.
RUN!!!
WELL THOSE AREN'T MERIT BADGES HE'S DROPPING--

CHABOOM
CHABOOM
YAAAH! OUR RIGS!
WHAT'D WE EVER DO TO YO-- ARRRGHH!
YOU'VE LITTERED THE LAND WITH THE BLOOD AND BODIES OF INNOCENTS.
IT STOPS NOW!
THAT MUTANT'S OUT OF HIS MIND. I'VE GOTTA GET OUT OF HERE.
OPEN UP! FOR SHOCK'S SAKE, OPEN UP!
BAM BAM BAM
WHAM!
I DON'T THINK SO.
KEERAASH

UGGH... I GIVE UP... MERCY...
YOU ATTACKED FAMILIES AND CHILDREN HEADED TO HALO CITY AND A BETTER LIFE.
I LEAVE YOU TO THE MERCY OF THE DESERT.
YOU'RE GETTING SOFT IN YOUR OLD AGE, MY BROTHER.
YOUR CONCERN FOR THE LONELY TRAVELERS HEADED WEST IS SURPRISING--
YOU? IT SEEMS MY HELP WASN'T NECESSARY.
DON'T THINK THE ASSIST WASN'T APPRECIATED, 'HAVOC'.
I HAD NO DESIRE TO PUT ROSA'S LITTLE BOY INTO THE MIDDLE OF GUNPLAY.
GRACIAS, SEÑOR HALCÓN. YOU ARE AN ANGEL.
AND SPEAKING OF ANGELS--LITTLE JOAQUIM SLEPT LIKE ONE THROUGH ALL THE COMMOTION.
WITH SUCH A CRAZY FAMILIA, I NEVER EXPECTED SUCH A PEACEFUL CHILD

TULA DE ALLENDE.
I'VE ARRANGED A TRANSPORT TO CARRY US OUT OF TULA.
OKAY, MR. SMART GUY, YOU GOT US IN. HOW ARE YOU GOING TO GET US OUT OF HERE?
IF YOU COULD ARRANGE EVERY PART OF YOUR ESCAPE...
...WHAT DO YOU NEED US FOR?
DO YOU FEEL SOMETHING STRANGE? DOES THE AIR SEEM SUDDENLY CHARGED TO YOU?
(WARNING. GRAVITY FIELD DISRUPTION.)
SHOCK, THE ZERO GEE'S KICKING OUT.
WHUMP
BONK
WHUMP
PLOP
OW...
WHAT HAPPENED--
(BOOK, FOR ONE SO BRILLIANT, YOU ARE SO TRANSPARENT.)
(THE COMMUNICATIONS DEPARTMENT TRACED AND DECIPHERED THE ENCRYPTED MESSAGE YOU SENT TO HALO CITY.)
(DID YOU REALLY BELIEVE THESE NORTH AMERICAN MUTANTS COULD GET YOU ACROSS THE BORDER?)
HERE IS WHY I NEEDED YOU THREE TO AID MY ESCAPE--
--BELIZE.

BOOK, ARE YOU ALL RIGHT?
FORGET ABOUT ME. BEWARE THE LIGHTNING SERPENTS.
<I'VE DEALT WITH YOUR KIND BEFORE, BELIZE--
<--ARROGANT MEN WHO THINK THEY CAN LEASH AND RESTRAIN OTHERS.>
<BUT NOT ALL MUTANTS ARE AS DOCILE AS BOOK.>
<DIDN'T YOU WARN YOUR WOULD-BE RESCUERS, BOOK-->
<--THAT I WIELD THE ENERGY OF THE GOD QUETZAL-COATL?>
AAAAGHH!
I'LL SAY IT IN ENGLISH SO YOUR FRIENDS UNDERSTAND--
I GAVE MY FIRSTBORN TO THE COLOMBIAN NARCOMANCER FLEISCHMANN.*
THROUGH SCIENCE AND DRUGS AND SORCERY, HE MADE MY BODY A CONDUIT FOR THE ANCIENT ENERGIES OF AZATLÁN.
*LAST SEEN IN DOOM 2099 #27.-- JOEY

URRGHH..
YOU AND YOUR COMPANIONS CAN DO NOTHING AGAINST THE SPEED AND POWER OF MY SERPENTS.
BE HONORED. YOU WILL JOIN MANY OF MY ENEMIES SACRIFICED IN THE NAME OF QUETZALCOATL.
BE STRONG, TIMOTHY FITZGERALD. YOU WIELD MORE POWER THAN HE KNOWS.
YOU DON'T HAVE TO TELL ME.
YOUR PAL BELIZE PICKED THE WRONG MUTANT TO PLAY GAMES WITH.
A LITTLE LIGHTNING IS THE LAST THING THAT'S GONNA SCARE ME.
FOOLISH BOY, YOU FORGET THAT BEHIND THAT DEATH MASK YOU ARE STILL MORTAL--
--WHILE I AM AS A GOD--
--AND MY POWER IS NOT OF THIS EARTH.

HE'S RIGHT. THESE CREATURES AREN'T MADE OF ANY ENERGY I'VE EVER ENCOUNTERED.
I CAN'T SEEM TO ABSORB THEIR POWER, AND WHEN I GRAB THEM I FEEL REAL PAIN.
NEVER DEALT WITH ANYTHING THAT SMACKS OF MAGIC BEFORE.
FITZGERALD-- YOU ARE AS MUCH A CREATURE OF ENERGY AS THE SERPENTS--
--AND YOU ARE CONNECTED TO MUCH GREATER ENERGIES...
DON'T KNOW IF I CAN HOLD OUT AGAINST THEM.
DON'T KNOW WHAT BOOK IS TALKING ABOUT, BUT--
--THE SERPENTS' RESISTANCE IS FADING.
THEIR ENERGY IS BECOMING PART OF ME NOW.
TIME TO GET SOME NEW PETS, BELIZE.
NO...THIS CANNOT BE...
...NO ONE COULD SURVIVE THE LEVEL OF ELDRITCH ENERGY I SENT TO YOU.
YOU SHOULD BE DEAD.

MAYBE YOU HAVEN'T HEARD.
BEEN THERE. DONE THAT.
CRIPPLE HIM AS HE CRIPPLED ME. MAKE HIS ENERGY YOURS.
YEAH, SUDDENLY I'M AWARE OF ALL THOSE NANOTECH GENERATORS COURSING THROUGH YOUR BODY--
THEY'RE CALLING TO ME.
YOUR ENERGY'S MINE, BELIZE.
ALL OF IT.
NO...
...YOU ARE STEALING THE LIFE FROM ME...
NOT QUITE--
--BUT ENOUGH SO YOU REMEMBER ME.

TIMOTHY, WHAT DID YOU DO?
I'VE NEVER SEEN YOU SO HUNGRY...SO FERAL.
I DON'T KNOW... IT WAS...IF FOR A MOMENT I WASN'T EVEN MYSELF ANYMORE.
IT WAS LIKE BOOK SAID; I WAS TAPPED INTO SOMETHING GREATER THAN MYSELF.
BOOK? IN THE STATE OF SHOCK THOSE SNAKES LEFT ME, I ALMOST FORGOT ABOUT HIM.
UGHH, THIS GHY'S HEAVY.
MANY THANKS, MY FRIENDS. I KNEW MY FAITH IN YOU WAS JUSTIFIED.
YOU SEEM TO KNOW A LOT ABOUT US. I DON'T KNOW IF I LIKE THAT.
AND I CAN'T SHAKE THE FEELING I'VE BEEN USED.
FORGIVE ME FOR BEING PRESUMPTUOUS.
I KNEW THAT YOU WERE MY ONLY HOPE AGAINST BELIZE.
I HOPE TO REPAY EACH OF YOU IN FULL WHEN WE REACH HALO CITY.
I HAVE SO VERY MUCH TO DO THERE.
NEXT: FOOLISH NOTIONS.